



The JERICHO PROJECT

Bringing Down Barriers to Recovery

A non-specialty court post booking diversion model for persons with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance use.

The Jericho Project targets individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance use whose level of criminal justice involvement makes them ineligible for diversion through the Memphis Crisis Intervention Team and other pre-booking diversion options. .

The Shelby County Public Defender (in partnership with the Mayor's Office, the Division of Community Services, Pretrial Services and multiple community providers) has pioneered a **non-specialty** court model for post-booking jail diversion. Different in concept from many mental health courts, this approach combines quality social work with legal advocacy and is designed for use before all criminal courts. The model is an inexpensive, flexible approach to the complicated problem of **post-booking** jail diversion and does not require special court resources or dockets.

The Jericho Project offers courts quality alternatives to pretrial detention utilizing an array of supervised, conditional release strategies. At the heart of these strategies is the ***Community Linkage Plan (CLP)***, a comprehensive transition plan developed by boundary spanners and tailored to the individual needs of the detainee. Based on the **APIC best practice transition planning model**, CLPs address critical domains of service (access to treatment, safe housing, bridge medication, restoration of benefits, transportation, supervision, etc) with an emphasis on evidence-based integrated treatment for co-occurring disorders. As a voluntary program, CLPs are developed with full consumer input and seek to form a network of supportive relationships that will sustain the consumer and break the recidivism cycle.

The Jericho Project seeks to serve the needs of persons whose contact with the criminal justice system is related to symptoms of untreated mental illness. There are no preset restrictions on eligibility for program consideration other than medical confirmation of serious mental illness and a candidate's willingness to embrace treatment options. Each linkage proposal is judged on its particular merits by the presiding judge after consideration of all relevant case circumstances (charge, arrest history, quality of treatment resources). Judges have approved 97% of all linkage plans presented to date.

The model is an effective approach to diversion of more serious felony offenders, those facing probation violations and persons with extensive arrest histories who are often excluded under other diversion models. Success during supervised release frequently improves ultimate case disposition, with impact ranging from full suspension of sentence to reduced (or outright dismissal) of charges. Evaluation data indicates significant jail impact, reduced caseload and recidivism, plus increased quality of life and treatment compliance.

--- Stephen Bush